



HARASSMENT, BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION SAFEGUARDING

Club Policy Statement

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Document Author
Mark Johnstone

Ledbury Rugby Football Club Ltd
Ross Road
Ledbury
Herefordshire
HR8 2LP

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Amendments List

Amendment No	Version No	Date	Details
0	0.1	8 th Nov 2024	Initial Draft
1	1.0	8 th Nov 2024	Initial issue

**THIS DOCUMENT IS ISSUED ON
THE AUTHORITY OF THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF
LEDBURY RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB**

Throughout this document, all references to ‘Ledbury RFC’ and ‘The Club’ should be interpreted as representing Ledbury Rugby Football Club Ltd, including its subsidiary company, The Pavilion Rooms (Ledbury) Ltd, unless specified otherwise.

Please notify the document author of any errors, omissions, or suggested amendments by e-mail to gm@ledburyrfc.co.uk

Policy Scope:

Ledbury RFC (“LRFC”) wants to ensure that all its players, staff, supporters, and volunteers are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect, free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination. Everyone involved with the club should take the time to ensure they understand what types of behaviour are unacceptable, as LRFC takes a zero-tolerance approach to this area.

We must all treat others with dignity and respect and always consider whether our words or conduct could offend. Even unintentional harassment or bullying is unacceptable.

The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to how LRFC staff and volunteers treat our corporate supporters, beneficiaries, suppliers, subcontractors, and associated family members. Everyone involved with the club has a duty to act in accordance with this policy, to treat everyone they come into contact with while enjoying the facilities at LRFC with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass others.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is the less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about harassment, bullying or discrimination or supported someone else's complaint.

What the law says:

Bullying and harassment are behaviours that make someone feel intimidated or offended. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. This Act prohibits harassment or discrimination related to age, gender, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 also makes it unlawful to pursue a course of conduct that you know or ought to know would amount to harassment, which includes causing someone alarm or distress. The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 also creates a legal duty for employers to proactively take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees, whether at work or in settings connected to work, as well as harassment from third parties such as customers, service users, or members of the public. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employees are entitled to a safe place and system of work.

The Club will employ the law to investigate and take action regarding any act by an individual deemed to have contravened the above.

Employees are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual harassment or situations where they felt at risk, even if nothing happened. They are reminded that if any employee or club member makes a complaint that is not upheld, they will not face any disciplinary action, as long as their complaint was not malicious.

What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal, or nonverbal conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. A single incident can amount to harassment.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may relate to age, disability, HIV status, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- Unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing, grabbing, brushing past someone, invading their personal space, and more severe forms of physical or sexual assault;
- Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour which the harasser may perceive as harmless;
- Continued suggestions for social activity after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome;
- Sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including e-mails, text messages, video clips and images sent by mobile phone or posted on the internet);
- Offensive or intimidating comments or gestures, or insensitive jokes or pranks;
- Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group or gender;
- Outing or threatening to out someone as gay or lesbian; or
- Ignoring or shunning someone, for example, by deliberately excluding them from a conversation
- The use of foul or potentially offensive language.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if they create an offensive environment for him.

What is bullying?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined, or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include personal strength and the ability to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal, and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:

- Shouting at, being sarcastic towards, ridiculing or demeaning others;
- Physical or psychological threats;
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- Inappropriate and/or derogatory remarks about someone's performance; · Abuse of authority or power by those in positions of seniority; or
- Deliberately excluding someone from meetings or communications without good reason.

LRFC is committed to ensuring a safe and enjoyable environment for all, free from harassment and bullying.

What is discrimination?

We do not discriminate based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

Discrimination by or against anyone is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect, and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the protected characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting help from a volunteer because they would not "fit in" because of their race would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion, or practice that also puts other people with the same protected characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement for a member of staff to be at the club all day when they have childcare commitments. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified.

LRFC's Commitment to All

It is LRFC's policy that everyone has the right to be happy, safe, and secure when at the club and/or using its facilities. We are committed to our Safeguarding Policy and will do everything we can to keep our club free from harassment, bullying, and discrimination. LRFC has a policy of zero tolerance relating to any behaviour that may abuse or harm any of our staff, players, volunteers, suppliers, and associated family members.

To achieve this LRFC commits to:

Ensuring everyone is adequately updated in understanding, recognising and reporting abuse.

One of the best ways to ensure that harassment, bullying, and discrimination do not occur at the club is to ensure that everyone understands what constitutes abusive behaviour. Sometimes, the

person abusing someone might not see what is being done; we need to be aware of what is and is not acceptable.

Everyone should be aware of our safeguarding policy, how to file a complaint against another, what evidence should be gathered if possible, and whom to report any concerns to.

Safeguard through observation

One of the best ways to try to stop abusive behaviour is to look for it.

Most bullying comes from those in powerful positions, or are perceived to be in such positions within an organisation, and the more people are aware of what amounts to bullying and harassment, the more likely they are to report it.

Annually reviewing our Safeguarding Policy, procedures and practices

To ensure compliance with safeguarding legislation and best practice, and to ensure that changes to relevant legislation are incorporated into the Club's policies.

Acting upon all concerns and issues reported

All allegations of abuse will be taken very seriously and investigated. We will ensure that when concerns are raised, they are acted on appropriately, proportionately and sensitively.

Reporting and investigations:

If anyone is concerned about harassment, bullying, or discrimination, LRFC will thoroughly investigate confidentially and sensitively.

The Club's General Manager will lead all investigations, supported by the Safeguarding Officer and Disciplinary Secretary. The General Manager will maintain strictly private and confidential records and report such matters to the Club's Board of Directors.

In such cases, individuals can raise incidents or concerns by contacting, in strict confidence, the Club General Manager at gm@ledburyrfc.co.uk or the LRFC Disciplinary Secretary at disciplinary@ledburyrfc.co.uk, who will act as an independent conduit for the individual to voice their concerns.

Individuals must ensure they forward contact details in their messages. The General Manager will contact the individual to discuss their concerns privately and confidentially. A separate club officer can be appointed to lead the detailed investigation if appropriate.

At this stage, if the staff member wishes to discuss their concerns further, the General Manager or Disciplinary Secretary will first discuss them in confidence with the Club Chairman. Thereafter, a confidential report will be made to the Board of Directors.

Throughout this process, the individual and the investigator will maintain regular contact. The Chairman and Board of Directors will also remain in contact. If the individual or others are at risk of harm, the chairman may report to relevant external agencies.

Once the investigation is complete, the Chairman will provide feedback to the complainant, with support from the investigator as appropriate, and an action plan will be communicated to them.

The Chairman will ensure the swift implementation of the action plan and monitor and evaluate its effectiveness in resolving team members' concerns or issues. LRFC has a duty to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to deal with the effects of bullying and harassment and to ensure the safety and welfare of everyone.

Depending on the nature of the issue, the action plan might include:

- Referring the issue to external agencies
- Disciplinary action
- Explaining to the individual who is the subject of the complaint:
 - Why their behaviour is inappropriate;
 - Exactly what they should do going forwards to ensure that they correct their behaviour;
 - The consequences if they don't;
 - Closely monitoring the situation to ensure that the individual is correcting their behaviour;
 - Support for the person reporting the concern.

Disciplinary Action

The censure decided by the Club should an individual(s) be found guilty of any offence outlined in this document will be proportional and relevant to the nature of the issue, but can be up to and including permanent exclusion from the club for life for the individual concerned.

Signature Page:

This policy document has been approved for issue by the Board of Ledbury Rugby Football Club Ltd

Hard Copy Signed

J Wilesmith
Club Chairman

Date: 8th November 2024

Date for next formal review: 1st October September 2025